Dear Members of CUNY's Board of Trustees,

We write to express our support for our colleagues at the College of Staten Island, who have written repeatedly to express their concern about the stated plans of the President at the College of Staten Island.

As you are aware, last spring this president proposed a wholesale replacement of the 20-year old, board-approved governance plan, that many feel was simply a response to a vote of no confidence held in the Faculty Senate in December 2020. (https://www.chronicle.com/article/a-college-president-says-he-wants-to-improve-governance-the-faculty-says-he-wants-to-destroy-it)

The amendment process of the current plan requires three things to occur for an amendment to be adopted: a successful referendum, presidential approval, and board approval. After twice delaying his original time table, the president called for a referendum between September 27th and October 1st. The results were decidedly unfavorable for the president: only 85 of 1367 eligible voters supported the revised plan. Of those that did participate -- nearly half the eligible voters -- 87% voted NO.

The matter should stand there, as there is no means for amendment through the current governance plan. However, in his email statement to the College after the referendum he stated "While I am disappointed that the plan was not supported by the majority of those who voted, I am reviewing these results in the context of feedback I have received from various constituents throughout this process." These unnamed constituents are unidentified, and have been silent during the entire process not appearing at three, dedicated town-hall like sessions or on the public discussion board held for this issue. This position of the president intentionally leaves open a backdoor for submitting a deeply unpopular, overwhelmingly defeated proposal on shared governance to the board.

In a recent letter to the Board and the Chancellerly, the New York State chapter of the AAUP states "This position runs counter to 50 years of college governance within CUNY and over 100 years of AAUP policies of college governance." (https://csicollegegovernance.github.io/GovernanceCrisis/NYSC-AAUP-CSI-governance-letter-9-29-21.pdf)

We ask the the members of the board make clear to the president of the College of Staten Island that the board will not consider changes to governance plan without a successful referendum.